THIS IS THE KING'S GAME. ALL VILLAGERS ARE PARTICIPATING.
THE KING'S ORDERS ARE ABSOLUTE.
PLEASE CARRY THEM OUT BY THE END OF AUGUST 20TH.
PARTICIPANTS ARE NOT ALLOWED TO QUIT.

ORDER 8
HONDA KAZUNARI, HIRANO MICHIKO, AND MARUOKA SHUUHEI MUST KILL TWO VILLAGERS EACH.
ANYONE WHO FAILS TO FOLLOW THE ORDER WILL BE PUNISHED BY BEING SKINNED.

KING'S GAME ORIGIN

THE YEAR IS 1977, AND THE REMOTE MOUNTAIN VILLAGE OF YONAKI HAS BEEN QUARANTINED. AFTER A THIRD DEATH, THE KING'S SEVENTH ORDER HAS BEEN COMPLETED AND THE REMAINING VILLAGERS HUDDLE IN THE MEETING HALL. DETERMINED TO ROOT OUT THE KING ONCE AND FOR ALL, THEY WAIT, THEORIZING THAT IF NO LETTER COMES, THEN THE KING IS AMONG THEM. YET THE NEXT DAY, WHEN THEY CHECK THE VILLAGE BULLETIN BOARD...

HONDA KAZUNARI, HIRANO MICHIKO, AND MARUOKA SHUUHEI
ME...
MICHI-KO...
...AND SHUU-HEI-SAN...
...KILL... TWO PEOPLE...
KILL TWO VILLAG-ERS EACH...

KILL
...?
CHAPTER 23
KING'S GAME
ORIGIN
STORY BY NOBUAKI KANAZAWA ART BY J-TA YAMADA

WHA—
SLAM
THIS ORDER GUARANTEES THAT PEOPLE ARE GONNA DIE!
WHAT THE HELL, MAN?!
I'M NOT GONNA—
!
BINGO.
SWIPE
EITHER THE THREE OF YOU NAMED IN THE LETTER..
...OR THE REST OF US!

OUR POSITIONS COULDN'T BE DEFINED MORE CLEARLY.
I SERIOUSLY DOUBT THE GOVERN-MENT...
...WILL FIND A WAY TO STOP THE KING'S GAME IN THE NEXT 24 HOURS.
AND SINCE I'M NOT TOO KEEN ON BEING FLAYED...

MICHIKO, ARE YOU...
ARE YOU REALLY GONNA TRY AND KILL US?

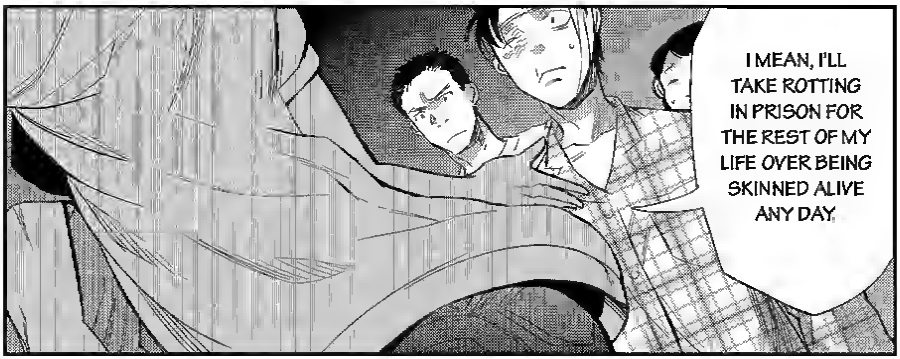
UN-FORTU-NATE-LY...
I THINK SO.

I'M NOT SO COLD THAT I CAN KILL SOMEONE WITHOUT HESITATING JUST BECAUSE I'VE BEEN ORDERED TO.
YIYOU-REI!
AFTERMATH?
BESIDES, EVEN IF I DO COMPLY...
THERE'S THE AFTERMATH TO CONSIDER.
DON'T GET ALL WORKED UP!

POINT
THIS IS THE KING'S GAME. ALL VILLAGERS ARE PARTICIPATING.
THE KING'S ORDERS ARE ABSOLUTE. PLEASE CARRY THEM OUT BY THE END OF AUGUST 20TH.
PARTICIPANTS ARE NOT ALLOWED TO QUIT.
ORDER 8
HONDA KAZUNARI, HIRANO MICHIKO, AND MARUOKA SHUUHEI MUST KILL TWO VILLAGERS EACH.
ANYONE WHO FAILS TO FOLLOW THE ORDER WILL BE PUNISHED BY BEING SKINNED.
KAZUNARI, ME AND SHUUHEI-SAN...
...ARE THE ONES IN REAL TROUBLE HERE.
YUP. THAT'S THE REAL PROBLEM.

EVEN IF WE SURVIVE THIS ROUND, WHAT'S THE POINT IF WE JUST GET CONVICTED OF MURDER ONE?
REGARDLESS OF THE KING'S GAME SITUATION, I DOUBT THE POLICE WILL TURN A BLIND EYE TO SOMETHING THAT MAJOR
BUT IT'S MAINLY THAT MURDER IS A CRIME
YOU KNOW WHY, DON'T YOU?
OBVIOUSLY BECAUSE WE'RE BEING FORCED TO MURDER OUR NEIGH-BORS
YEAH, THERE'S THAT...

MEAN-
WHILE...
IF RYUUJI AND THE REST OF THEM JUST RUN AND HIDE FOR 24 HOURS, THEY WON'T BE GUILTY OF ANYTHING
AH—
OF COURSE...
WE DON'T HAVE MUCH CHOICE BUT TO FOLLOW ORDERS


I MEAN, I'LL TAKE ROTTING IN PRISON FOR THE REST OF MY LIFE OVER BEING SKINNED ALIVE ANY DAY.

I...
I'M SURE YOU FEEL THE SAME, RIGHT, KAZUNARI?

I DON'T CARE. I'M NOT GONNA GO ALONG WITH THIS!
HRMM... WELL.
I GUESS TWO HOMI- CIDES IS ENOUGH O JUSTIFY E DEATH NALTY
NO.
NOT BE- CAUSE OF THAT.
I AM NOT A MURDERER!

YOU REALIZE YOU'RE SEALING YOUR OWN FATE, RIGHT?
I TOLD YOU, I DON'T CARE.
I REFUSE.
I WIL NOT KILL YOU GUYS JUST TO PROLONG MY OWN LIFE!

I'M NOT FOLLOWING THIS ORDER, NO MATTER WHAT!
EVER HEARD OF THE PLANK OF CAR-NEADES?
KAZU-NARI
YOU HAVEN'T SAID A WORD.
YOU'RE WITH ME, RIGHT, SHUUHEI-SAN?

A SHIP-WRECKED SAILOR IS TOSSED INTO THE OCEAN.
HE FINDS A LONE WOODEN PLANK AND CLINGS TO IT.
IT'S AN ETHICAL QUESTION POSED BY AN ANCIENT GREEK PHI-LOSOPHER.
PLANK OF CAR-NEADES?
A SECOND SAILOR AP-PEARS...
...AND TRIES TO GRAB THE SAME PLANK

BUT THE SURVIVING SAILOR CANNOT BE CONSIDERED GUILTY.
THE FIRST SAILOR BELIEVES THAT IF THEY BOTH TRY TO HOLD IT, THEY WILL BOTH DROWN.
BUT THE PLANK IS VERY SMALL.
SO HE SHOVES THE SECOND MAN AWAY...
...CAUSING HIM TO DROWN.

SELF DEFENSE. HE HAD TO KILL TO LIVE.
SHUU-HEI-SAN...
YOU SEE?
DON'T YOU THINK THIS SITUATION IS THE SAME?

IF WE DON'T KILL SOMEONE, WE'RE THE ONES WHO DIE.

NO, THAT'S THE WRONG WAY TO THINK!
KILLING SOMEONE JUST TO SAVE YOUR OWN SKIN ISN'T—
KAZU-NARI.
GRAB

AREN'T YOU TELLING ME TO DIE?!
THEN IN LESS THAN 24 HOURS, I'M DEAD.
IF I DON'T KILL TWO PEOPLE...
YOU'RE SAYING THAT'S FAIR?!

I—
I...
LOOKS LIKE OUR SIDE'S VOTED.
HAH.
LISTEN UP GUYS, I'VE GOT AN IDEA.

...IDEA?
IT BETTER NOT BE US LYING OOWN AND LETTING YOU SLIT OUR THROATS WITHOUT A FIGHT.
OF COURSE NOT.
NOW...
I REALIZE AT THIS POINT ANYTHING COMING FROM MY MOUTH...
...ISN'T VERY TRUST-WORTH.

I THINK WE CAN MAKE THIS A GAME WHERE EVERYONE HAS A FAIR SHOT.
BUT...
A... GAME?!

ONE WAY OR ANOTHER...
...THIS ORDER IS TAKING PEOPLE OUT.
THERE'S NO WAY FOR EVERYONE TO BE SAVED.
SO WE'LL TRY TO KILL YOU GUYS...
...AND YOU TRY TO ESCAPE.

IT'S LIKE TAG. THE "IT" TEAM HAS TO KILL TO SURVIVE, THE OTHERS HAVE TO RUN.
I THINK IT'S THE FAIR WAY TO HANDLE THIS.

WE'LL GIVE YOUR GROUP A TEN MINUTE HEAD START.
RUN AND HIDE WHEREVER YOU WANT.
YOU CAN'T JUST DECIDE THAT!
WHY SHOULD WE PLAY ALONG WITH YOUR SICK LITTLE GAME?!
IF WE KILL YOU... THEM'S THE BREAKS. NO GRUDGES
REMEMBER, OUR LIVES ARE ON THE LINE TOO.
YOU...
WE'LL JUST GO STRAIGHT TO THE COPS AND THAT'LL BE THE END!
THE VILLAGE IS QUARANTINED, DUMBASS.

THE GOVERNMENT DOESN'T WANT ANYONE COMING IN CONTACT WITH US.
WHERE'RE THEY GONNA PUT YOU?
REMEMER. THEY'D MUCH RATHER SEE EVERYONE INFECTED WITH THE VIRUS DEAD
RRGH...
WE'RE ON OUR OWN AND YOU KNOW IT.

I KILL, OR I DIE.
I'VE GOT NO CHOICE.
MICHI-KO... CAN...
CAN YOU BRING YOUR-SELF TO KILL THAT EASILY?
OR ARE YOU GONNA TAKE THE INITIA-TIVE AND TRY TO KILL US RIGHT HERE AND NOW?
...
IF YOU'RE UPSET ABOUT IT, BLAME THE KING...THE VIRUS, NOT ME.